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Instead of the Tavern

Being a Study in
Counter Attractions

By

J. W. HARVEY THEOBALD
and
A. F. HARVEY

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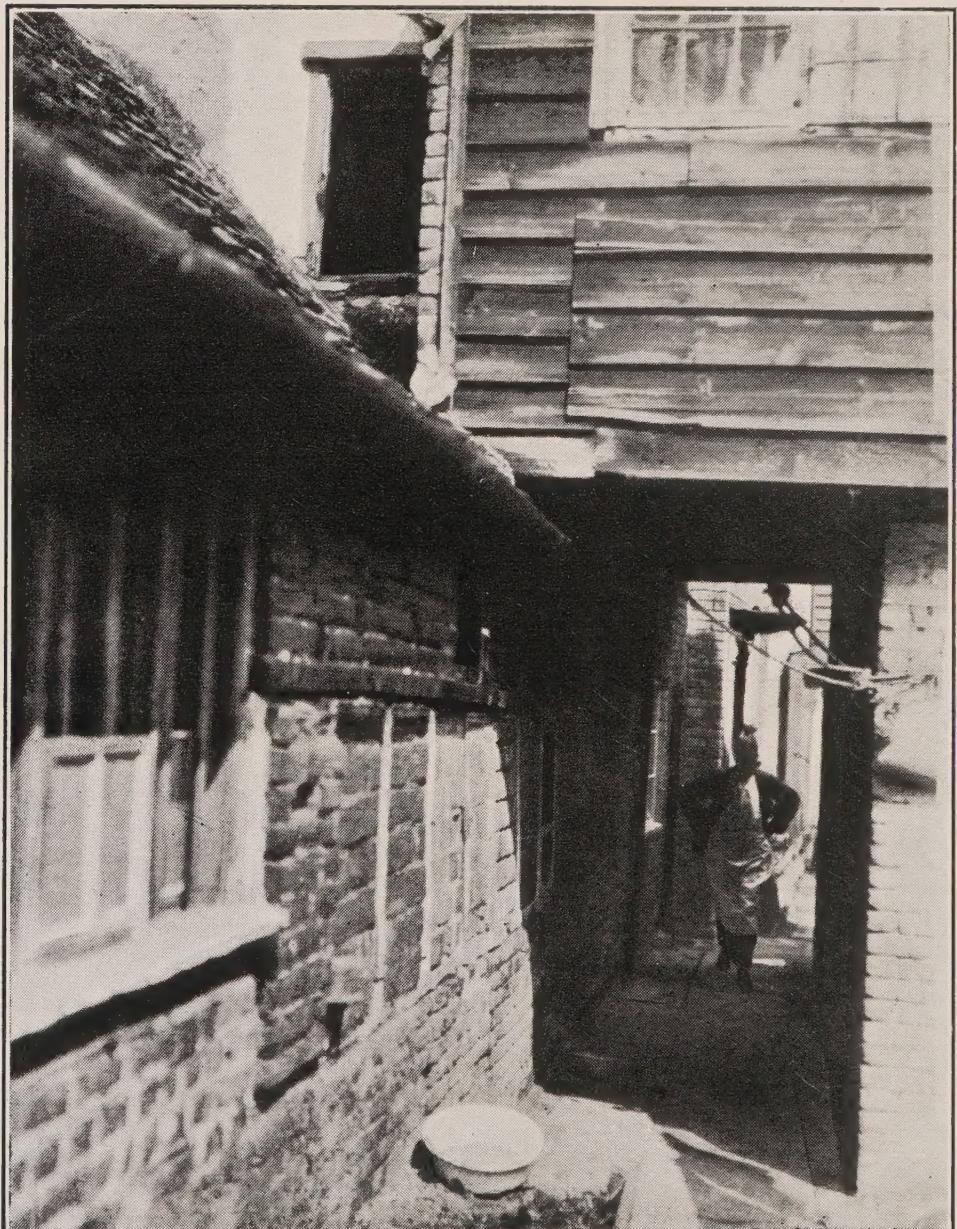
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INSTEAD OF THE TAVERN



A WINDSOR SLUM.

Frontispiece

Instead of the Tavern

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Counter-Attractions**

By
J. W. HARVEY THEOBALD
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PREFACE TO NEW AND REVISED EDITION

THE war has forced into prominence problems whose solution is felt to be of national importance, and in the forefront of them, not in our country alone, is the one to the consideration of which these pages are devoted. The experience of the last three years has shown more clearly than ever the value of the positive and constructive temperance work which is here described. This has been written large for all to read in the work of the Y.M.C.A. huts, without which it is difficult to picture what would have been the life of thousands of soldiers. Some idea of the need can, however, be obtained by any one who has spent any time in France, and seen the contrast between some crowded military centre where a good "foyer du soldat" has been established, and those where there are no such facilities, and where the tired and weary men have no place to go to but the tavern. As the war has progressed the higher French military authorities have themselves taken action to start and encourage the formation of such "foyers," social centres, where unalcoholic drinks are provided, together with writing facilities, and the opportunity for

friendly conversation. The negative reform of suppressing the use of spirits is felt not to be enough; the soldier has positive needs which must be supplied, and if a healthy way is not found him, he will himself find other and less healthy ways to satisfy himself.

At home we have learned the same lesson in the experience of the munition workshops. If the workers are to have a reasonable chance of maintaining health of mind and body, under the strain which war conditions involve, they need refreshment for both, refreshment which will make for true recreation, the rebuilding of the tired frame, the renewing of the weary spirit. The truest work for temperance is surely that which is based on this wide conception of human needs and social duties, which realizes that abstinence is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, and that end the fullest and worthiest use of all man's faculties, the completest development of body and soul, the noblest and strongest service of each for all.

FOREWORD

THOSE interested in social reform must be grateful to the authors of this brochure for calling public attention to aspects of a great national problem to which too little thought has been given by many of us. Temperance reformers of the past fifty years in their zeal for the removal of a great evil have often seemed to those who do not realize its magnitude to be preaching a cheerless gospel of negation ; certainly in denouncing the evils connected with the public-house as it exists to-day, they have sometimes neglected some of the forces with which they are contending. They have not always seen the good mingled with the evil of the existing institution, or the complexity of the attractions, some of them in themselves right and healthful, which now draw people to the public-house, so often to their undoing.

We can never hope to get rid of the public-house system as we know it, until we are prepared to replace it by something better, and until more than the foundations of the new system have been laid. There will always be, it may be admitted, a certain number of men and women who have no need of any kind of public-house, content with their home life and with such intercourse

with the world outside as street, and church, and business offer them. The majority need some place where they can mix on friendly terms with their fellows, where they can exchange thoughts and share their leisure. The best type of public-house to-day owes its strength to this permanent need of human nature.

In seeking to provide an alternative to the public-house, we must not be content with institutional churches, or sectional club-houses, or with the foundations of private philanthropy. We need real public-houses into which men may go as of right and not by favour—this is the case when a temperance refreshment room is run upon business lines, or again, when it is conducted as a municipal institution or under some public trust. Such places are desirable everywhere ; they are most of all needed in the crowded centres of population, where a large number of families live in homes of one or two rooms.

But it is abundantly evident that many of the victims of alcoholism have gone to the public-house not merely to satisfy this social side of their nature, but rather to gain momentary escape from the pressing evils and hardships of their own lives. In the country men go to the tavern to escape from lonely dullness ; in the towns to seek escape from other cares ; “*securos latices et longa oblivia potant.*” So long as we suffer sweated conditions of labour, the injustice of the slum landlord, and the ugly monotony of the jerry-built gardenless “working class quarter,”

we cannot wonder that a man should get drunk because he feels it to be the "shortest way out of Manchester." We must, therefore, by all the means in our power, collectively and individually aim at cutting at the root of these causes of intemperance: collectively, under the provisions of the Town Planning Act we must get local authorities to prevent the growth of slums and ensure the gradual transformation of towns; individually, it may be by becoming shareholders in garden-suburbs, garden cities, tenants' co-operative societies, or in other ways, we can help to make the conditions of life better for our fellows. In the meanwhile we are confronted by the disease of fevered town life, and while we must not be diverted from the more important permanent preventive measures, we may welcome in their proper place the various efforts which, under existing conditions, are being made to provide healthy counter-attractions to the dangerous influences which, apart from them, would draw men and women to become drunkards. The institutional churches of our big cities and other philanthropic experiments carried on at a financial loss for the sake of the service they may render to the needy may be justified on this ground. But they do not belong to the permanent fabric of the future, though they may provide a training ground for the habits and faculties which will be needed in the healthier community which we wish to see in being. And whilst we turn our faces towards the light of this fairer civiliza-

tion of the morrow, we must surely try to do something more than we yet have done for the needs of man to-day. These pages show something of what others are doing; whether we agree with all the attempts to provide wholesome cheer and healthful recreation which are here described, they may well stimulate us ourselves either to take up some similar positive work of temperance reform, or to strive more effectively to grapple in some other way with the great disease which now saps the strength of the nation.

T. EDMUND HARVEY.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	FOREWORD	7
I	THE PROBLEM STATED	13
II	ECONOMIC MISERY	19
III	GARDEN CITIES	26
IV	SETTLEMENTS	29
V	THE CRAVING FOR AMUSEMENT	37
VI	OTHER EXPERIMENTS	48
VII	TEMPERANCE CATERING	55
VIII	THREE STRIKING EFFORTS	59
IX	COUNTER-ATTRACTI0NS IN WAR TIME	67
X	CONCLUSION	78

ILLUSTRATIONS

A Windsor Slum .....	..	..	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Washing Day .....	..	..	<i>faces page</i> 19
New Earswick Folk Hall .....	..	..	„ 27
A Saturday Night Entertainment ..			„ 33
Social Institute, Birmingham ..			„ 42
Browning Settlement Goose Club ..			„ 52
Blue House, Stepney ..	..	..	„ 62
A Y.M.C.A. Marquee ..	..	..	„ 68

INSTEAD OF THE TAVERN

CHAPTER I

A PROBLEM OF THE CENTURIES STATED

WHEN, in 1912, we issued the first edition of this booklet, we called attention to the fact that Social Reform was in the air. We then said : "Countless organizations on every hand are striving to deal with the conditions which render so many lives squalid, wretched and evil. Various schools of reformers have panaceas ; rival politicians have their competing programmes, and too often those whose aims and ideas are identical are more ready to range themselves in opposing camps than to unite against the common foe." Since these words were written, many and startling changes have taken place. The great War has for three years occupied the minds and activities of vast sections of the public in many countries of the world. New problems have arisen, abnormal conditions have demanded active efforts, in some ways the whole national structure has been altered. But there is increasingly a need for social work ;

the air is full of ideas for reconstruction after the War. What will be the conditions of life and labour for the next few years ? This is problematic, but certain it is, we shall have to face the problem, though the approach may be in a fashion other than that which had been anticipated.

A HARD TASKMASTER

England has long been a land of startling contrasts. With ever-increasing wealth, poverty is yet too frequent ; with boundless facilities for pleasure, misery may be found on every hand. It is true that war-time has shown us a great increase in the weekly income of the wage-earner ; the spending power of the mass of the public has been far greater than ever before, in spite of the lessening value of the sovereign ; but this condition of inflated income is bound to be followed by a period of serious depressions. Problems of unemployment and poverty will again threaten us, and probably in an aggravated form.

Whatever economic causes may be at work to check development, however much the inequalities of life may tend to emphasize the difference between wealth and poverty, however varying may be our views as to the causes and their specific remedies, we can but see that amongst the forces which make themselves felt on every hand there is one which is the handmaid of luxurious self-pleasing, and the taskmaster of penurious wretchedness ; a force which has become so

familiar to the mass of our fellow-countrymen that the day seems far distant when it can be eliminated from our midst. This force is drink. An entrenched vested interest, wealthy and highly organized, it defies public sentiment, while its results constitute in many ways a drain upon the public purse. Any attempt to lessen its output, or increase its contribution to the revenue, is at once met with determined opposition.

The fruits of the traffic are testified to, not only by politicians, but by judges, magistrates, police officials, medical men and ministers of religion. Our newspapers are piling up an ever-increasing record of sin and suffering, degradation and despair, as the results of intemperance.

It is most instructive, however, to note that the experience of the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic) proves that restrictions of facilities for obtaining liquor are followed by improved conditions. Reports from the Army, Navy, and Transport Authorities, all show that the efficiency of the worker increases *pro rata* with the decrease in the facilities for obtaining drink; whilst the testimony of numerous Chief Constables is conclusive as to the betterment in social conditions which follows severe restrictions.

THE SAME PROBLEM BUT CHANGING CONDITIONS

The problem is not new, but conditions are

changing. In the great fight which, since the days of the seven men of Preston, has been waged against strong drink, many victories have been won, and great blessings have resulted. The public attitude has greatly altered since the mid-Victorian era. Old customs have passed away. Scientific research has changed the outlook of the medical profession. Total abstinence is no longer on its defence. But the huge annual expenditure of some £200,000,000, to which must be added the cost of the drink-begotten crime, misery, pauperism, lunacy, suffering, and death, proves to the thoughtful that there must be no slackening of effort, no abatement of zeal, no turning away from the conflict against this, "the only terrible enemy England has to fear." The words of Philip Snowden may be quoted:—

"Gambling may reduce a family to starvation ; commercial speculation may lead to ruin ; capitalism, by low wages, may cause poverty and physical deterioration, and drive women to shame ; landlordism may be responsible for the ruin of agriculture and the degradation of the labourers to the position of serfs ; *but*, the relation between cause and effect in these cases is not so obvious and immediate as between drink and the misery, poverty, ruin, crime, lunacy, disease, and death which the traffic brings in its train."

Yet it is sometimes urged that there is no longer room or need for temperance effort. Certainly the old-fashioned temperance meeting is a thing of the past. Many reformers who were once ardent temperance workers now fight

shy of the very mention of temperance. It is, therefore, necessary to recognize that the evil of intemperance must be fought along new lines as well as old.

ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO TEMPERANCE

Whilst the wealthier classes are not free from its baneful effects, it is a commonplace to say that where they reside, the tavern, with its unpleasant adjuncts is forbidden, whilst in the poorest and most thickly populated districts the public-houses abound, and their attractions seem irresistible. The individual appeal must go on. There is a readiness to-day to lay all the blame upon "economic conditions," but the evil cannot be thus entirely shelved. The individual can rise above his weakness, and the individual who does give up the use of alcohol almost invariably is better in health, pocket and surroundings, as the result. Nevertheless, there is another side. The grim and grinding poverty, the hard conditions of daily work, and the debasing environment of too many of our fellows, are factors which must not be forgotten. It is easy to feel indignant at the folly of the husband and father wasting his wages in the public-house. It is easy to pride ourselves upon our temperance. But to gauge the evil in all its fullness and rightly to seek a remedy, demand a sympathetic understanding of the temptation, and a wider vision than one simply of condemnation and of scorn. It is our

purpose to try to indicate some of those conditions which make the tavern a power in the land, and to show some of the attempts which are being made in various directions to provide counter attractions to the public-house. Having made long and careful study of these efforts, we desire to ask our readers to give some thought to the facts which we have elicited, and the deductions we have made from those facts. We propose to deal with the subject from many points of view, in the hope that some real interest may be evoked, and some practical outcome secured.



WASHING DAY.

To face page 19

CHAPTER II

ECONOMIC MISERY

WITH regard to the causation of intemperance, the whole problem is so complex that a wide view must be taken if a solution of the difficulty is to be reached. The ideal of "Total Abstinence for the individual and Prohibition for the State" would bring the millennium, but the process of converting the nation to this ideal is so slow that only by looking back a generation can any progress be seen. To hasten the wiping out of the drink evil we must look at some of those causes which render intoxicants so potent a temptation.

ENVIRONMENT

Amongst these causes environment undoubtedly plays a part. No one can be acquainted with the crowded condition of many of the working-class quarters of our great cities, and those poorer districts which so easily degenerate into slums, without feeling that life under such conditions must be so difficult that anything which promises a respite, however brief, or which gives light and colour, however transient, must prove an attraction hard to resist. Added to this, the conditions of labour make life still more burdensome.

SWEATING

A great deal has been heard of late years with regard to the evils of sweating. The Select Committee of the House of Lords which sat to consider the subject, declared its inability to assign an exact meaning to the term "sweating," but stated the evils to include (*a*) an unduly low rate of wages, (*b*) excessive hours of labour, (*c*) the insanitary state of houses in which the work is carried on. These three causes not only operate against any approach to domestic comfort, but must result in a lowering of the standard of the social and moral outlook. According to the census returns of 1911, nearly half a million people in England reside in one-roomed tenements. Often in this one room these people have to eat, sleep, dress, cook, live, rear children, and die, and the evil is terribly accentuated when sweated industries are carried on in these "homes." It does not need much exercise of the imagination to realize that one of the effects of this terrible overcrowding, and the evil of sweated industries, is to send the father and older children in search of amusement and change outside. Too often the public-house is the nearest, as well as the most attractive, resort. It is true that drink is the main cause of poverty, but it is also true that depressed physical energy and comfortless homes induce a craving for drink.

In a paper read by Professor Stanley Kent, M.A., before the Society for the Study of Inebriety, speaking of "industrial drinking," now recog-

nized as one of the worst forms of drinking, he says :—

“ Its origin is not to be found in any simple inborn trait ; it is not the result of an inebriate diathesis. On the contrary it is to be sought in the reaction of the organism to the ordinary physiological effects of alcohol. Industrial drinking is caused by conditions which ‘*induce in the organism certain states which are favourably modified by alcohol.*’ The result of an ordinary hard day’s work in the open air is a pleasant lassitude rather than a feeling of discomfort. For it is not healthy labour which produces unpleasant symptoms—it is labour performed under factory conditions, for too long hours, by workers already tired and often under-fed, whose health is undermined by unhygienic surroundings, whose aspirations and ambitions have been killed, and who often have become mere machines.”

In speaking of the severity of industrial fatigue, Professor Kent quotes an American writer as follows :—

“ The first experience in exhaustion, in failing nerve, and hopelessness, is terrifying to one who has had health and strength. He grasps at anything that will give him back even for an hour his sense of well-being and confidence. Collapsed energy is as real an ill as a broken leg, and more to be feared because less understood. Industry is trying to understand why it comes so early to so many. It is because of long hours, poor air, bad water and cold lunches taken under conditions that would make even good food indigestible. The men are so done up that they take liquor as a means of quick—if brief—recuperation,” and proceeds : “ This view, expressed by a writer in the United States, is sound

and can be proved by many instances. In factories where these evils have been corrected the results are remarkable. With the introduction of a lunch-room and recreation grounds in one factory two out of three public-houses in the immediate neighbourhood were obliged to close. Soon the third disappeared also. Men drink because of the FATIGUE PRODUCED BY LABOUR, NOT, be it understood, that industrial labour necessarily produces a fatigue which leads to alcoholism. Where conditions have been made perfect, not only is drinking rare, but—a much more surprising fact—the tradition has been broken. It is not with industry that we have a quarrel, but with the conditions under which it is carried on."

THE TAVERN AND ITS SEQUENCE

The sight of an East-end street, dreary and muddy and wretched in the winter, hot and airless and stifling in the summer, crowded with the teeming masses of its population, remembering how many of these masses live from hand to mouth, and how few know how to make life best worth living, would itself suggest to the thinking mind how terrible a temptation is "the fatal facility of recourse to the public-house." And one has to remember also that it is pretty generally admitted that the greater these facilities of recourse, the more potent the evils of drinking become. The well-known case of the "black area" in Birmingham is noteworthy. Here, in a crowded district, where the poorest congregated, and where there were more public-houses in proportion to the population than in any other part of the city, the death rate was appallingly high;

the excessive proportion of cases admitted from that area to the hospitals, asylums, and workhouse ; the little children whose neglected state brought them under the notice of the Police-aided Association for Clothing Poor Children, and of the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children ; the number of arrests for drunkenness, assaults, and other misdemeanours ; all contributed a strikingly lurid comment upon the truism, “ Where there is drink there is danger.” But please note that competent observers tell us that concurrently with a diminution in the number of licences, in accordance with the settled policy of the Licensing Bench, the fruits of the traffic lessened perceptibly. This is a fact so often observed that one wonders that there can be any questioning in the minds of social reformers as to drink being *causa causans* of many of the social evils they deplore.

DWELLINGS AND LABOUR

It is not only in big cities that the trouble is to be found. The unrest and general revolt against existing conditions, which are so prevalent in the labour world at the present time, are causes of much concern. In an article which appeared some time since in the *Westminster Gazette* it was stated that

“ the better-class workman of the present generation is filled with a deep discontent with the conditions amid which his lot is cast. . . . Deep down in his soul is a blind revolt against the dirt and squalor,

against life as he finds it. While there are great stretches of land that might have been filled, rows of depressing brick houses have been crowded together without a scrap of garden or sight of green. Decent cleanliness, to say nothing of comfort, is almost impossible."

It is such conditions as these which drive men to seek relief in the public-house. To many the classical instance of Walbottle ¹ is sufficient to indicate how little some of the great landlords think of the well-being of the toilers who, by the sweat of their brows, contribute towards the luxury of the wealthy.

The conditions of labour in some of the great trades, too, play a part in the problem. There are those who have to labour in the darkness of the coal mine, for hours together never seeing daylight, and working in cramped positions. Surely their life demands some compensation. So with the tin-miner, and with those who work in the intense heat of the steel-works, forges and blast furnaces. Does not their work build up, not the wealth of the capitalist alone, but the prosperity of the nation ? The State owes them

¹ Walbottle, a mining village, contained a row of back-to-back houses, each having two rooms, one downstairs, and the other an unceiled attic, approached by a ladder. Nearly every house overcrowded, very damp, no possibility of ventilation, the yards not cemented, and filth lying about in depressions; one water-tap, the sole provision for the whole twenty-two houses. Such was the accommodation supplied by the owner, a noble duke, for drawing some £2,500 per year from royalties from the collieries. The death rate in that particular group of cottages was nearly double the average of the district.

a debt which it is only just beginning to recognize. The irony of present-day conditions under which the nation pays large sums to privileged public servants, the value of whose work is by no means universally admitted, and only with difficulty provides an old-age pension for the toiler who has reached the allotted span of man's life, makes the glory of our land dim with injustice and wrong.

We must not overlook the factors alluded to in this chapter, and while the frontal attack upon intemperance by direct work on total abstinence lines must be unremittingly maintained, the social reformer can materially assist by flank attacks upon the evils of bad economic conditions. When the temperance party recognizes the value of social work, and the social worker recognizes the value of temperance effort, progress will be more speedy, and the outlook will be more hopeful.

CHAPTER III

GARDEN CITIES

WE have endeavoured to sketch some of the conditions under which vast masses of our fellow-citizens are living. We have shown that by environment and the hardship of their calling, and by the "fatal facility of recourse to the public-house," the problem of intemperance is greatly intensified. The various efforts to solve the difficulty, efforts to which we hope to make reference in this and later chapters, are too sporadic to be widely effective. On the other hand, the tavern is almost everywhere. Almost invariably where the people are crowded together the taverns are most numerous, and, as already shown, their power of attraction is, to many people, irresistible.

It is almost impossible successfully to group illustrations of what is being done to remedy the drink evil. One attempt we mention first because in some senses it seems to go to the root of the difficulty. This is the creation, by philanthropic merchants, of garden cities, in order to ease the housing problem, and incidentally the drink problem. The provision of good cottages



NEW EARSWICK FOLK HALL.

among healthy and pleasant surroundings is a great step in the right direction, especially when coupled with the conditions of work obtaining in many of the modern factories.

Pre-eminent amongst these garden cities Port Sunlight, Bournville, New Earswick, Histon and Hull Garden City may be noted. The details of each of these experiments are most interesting, but we must confine ourselves to generalization. The houses are excellent and cheap, the gardens form a noteworthy feature ; open-air recreation grounds, central halls for indoor amusements, gymnasia, swimming-baths, etc., are provided. A feature of special interest is the careful provision made for the comfort of the employees inside the factories. Spacious and airy recreation-rooms, excellent sanitary conditions, the encouragement of thrift and self-culture by the Savings Banks, classes for needlework, carpentry, etc., and the medical and dental care taken of the workers, for whom are provided the services of medical men, dentists and nurses, are to be noted, while, as an important factor in promoting temperance, the improved housing and sanitary conditions are of immense value.

The fostering of the civic spirit, as well as the encouragement of kindly social relationships, have done much towards the raising of the standard of life ; but there are, in some cases, features which are not easy to comprehend, as, for instance, in one village where at first there was no licensed house but now there is one—mainly patronized, it

is true, for the sake of food and refreshment by the thousands of visitors ; but the licence was only applied for as the result of an overwhelming popular vote by the village inhabitants. But, broadly speaking, there can be little doubt that this provision of garden cities round the factory must help towards a solution of the housing question, and, to a large degree, obviate disease, and remove some of the temptations of the tavern.

This chapter would be incomplete without a reference to Co-Partnership in Housing. From the point of view of the social reformer, who believes that healthy environment can counteract the influence of the public-house, this method seems distinctly a beneficial one. Briefly, it is the co-operate provision of garden cities, as apart from the factory. Most of the arguments in favour of the factory garden cities, apply equally to the co-partnership idea.

CHAPTER IV

SETTLEMENTS

OUR "problem of the centuries" is a many-sided one, and many and varied are the efforts being made to counteract the evil. In the preceding chapter we referred to some of the more interesting of the experiments in housing reform by which men and women are being provided with a healthy environment, in place of the contaminating and depressing influences of slum areas. In the present chapter we propose to relate some of our personal experiences of the efforts being made in the very heart of always depressing, and too often evil and debasing conditions, by the Religious and Social Settlements, to counteract environment and bring some brightness, some joy to those who are compelled to spend the greater portion of their existence under conditions already described.

Many of the religious denominations maintain settlements in one or the other of the poorer districts of London: these settlements vary in detail, but generally speaking, they provide centres for religious, social, and educational work amongst that very class to whom the

public-house, in the great majority of cases, is the only available change from the daily labour. We have only space to describe in brief the work of two or three, but these may be regarded as typical of all.

OXFORD HOUSE, BETHNAL GREEN

This well-known centre of Church of England activities is easily reached from the city ; and one soon finds oneself in a district of back-to-back houses, varied here and there by blocks of workmen's flats or dwellings, the results of some doubtless well-meant efforts at housing reform, hardly less repellent in appearance, though probably more sanitary, than the slums they replaced. Bethnal Green is a district of factories and sweated industries, the home of many thousands of men and women, lads and girls, the latter employed largely in "blind alley" occupations. To Bethnal Green came the Oxford House Settlement in 1884, bringing young men fresh from Oxford Colleges, to live in the heart of this area of mean streets. The work has grown and extended since then, and reached a stage probably never contemplated by the pioneers of the movement.

At the time of our visit, the then head of the Settlement was the Rev. H. R. H. Sheppard,¹ a clergyman full of enthusiasm and practical brotherhood, presiding over a household of

¹ Now Rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, where he is making a Centre for the Study of Social Questions.

Oxford graduates who were brought into nightly touch with the men and boys of East London. These Oxford men come sometimes just for a few weeks' residence ; others reside at the Settlement for years together, devoting their lives entirely to the work ; others again are engaged in the day-time in pursuit of their various callings in the city and elsewhere, and give their evenings only. It frequently happens that men preparing for the ministry and seeking experience at Oxford House return after ordination to labour at one or the other of the churches in the district—there are ten or more clergy in Bethnal Green who were lay workers at the Settlement, a fact which speaks eloquently of their devotion to the cause of suffering humanity.

Mr. Sheppard very freely replied to our questions as to the general influence exercised by Oxford House and its work upon the residents, from the point of view of the Temperance reformer. Almost all the men on coming into residence used alcoholic beverages as a matter of course. But one result of being brought into direct contact with the realities of life in the sights and sounds and surroundings of Bethnal Green is that many of the residents very soon became total abstainers ; and probably those who do not become personal abstainers are careful not to use intoxicants while engaged in the work of Oxford House. Until he himself entered into the work, he had not thought it necessary to be an abstainer ; but the close personal association

with the social and labour conditions of Bethnal Green very quickly brought the conviction that personal total abstinence was essential to effective work. It did not take long to convince the social worker in Bethnal Green that a vast amount of misery, vice, and poverty was drink-caused. "Take away the public-house," he said, "and Bethnal Green will become a paradise."

WORK AMONGST MEN AND BOYS

The work is mainly amongst men and boys, though there are ladies' settlements in association with Oxford House which are doing a great work in uplifting women and girls. While the many activities have a distinctly Church of England basis, Oxford House is not attached to any of the Churches of Bethnal Green, though working cordially with all of them; and care is taken to avoid anything savouring of a propagandist nature in its dealings with the many hundreds of men and boys coming under its influence.

THE PROVISION OF RECREATION AND AMUSEMENT

The ample provision made for recreation and amusement in these clubs is of untold benefit. The clamant need for such work, evident from the appalling conditions prevailing throughout the district, makes one tremble to think what would happen in this great city but for the self-sacrificing labours of such men as are engaged in this and similar agencies. It was encouraging to learn, in response to an inquiry, of the lasting influence





A SATURDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT.

of the clubs over the lives of men and boys. It is estimated that quite 95 per cent. are really influenced, and only some 5 per cent. fail to respond to the efforts of the workers.

But the work of Oxford House only begins with the work of the clubs. Would that we had space to describe the great swimming-bath, the marvellous Saturday night entertainments when thousands of men and women, real East Londoners, will enter wholeheartedly into a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays or a concert of high-class music, the men's Sunday afternoon meetings, the Men's and Boys' Camps, the sports club, etc. And what is the result of all this work? Only God knows it in its fullness, but as far as human knowledge can measure, it is a work of incalculable good in humanizing and brightening the lives of thousands who are condemned by circumstances to a life which otherwise would possess little of brightness and joy and all that makes life worth living.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

The work at Bethnal Green, in that it is confined largely to men and boys, has features not perhaps to be discovered in any of the other great settlements where the efforts are on a more general and comprehensive scale. Probably the object of the Robert Browning Settlement at Walworth—"For the furtherance of the Kingdom of God as it is declared in the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . by every means available to pro-

mote the full and happy development of body, soul, and mind"—may be taken to apply fittingly also to the Bermondsey, Whitefield's, Deptford, Claremont, the Leysian Mission, Mansfield House, Cambridge House, and other Settlements in London.

CLAREMONT MISSION, PENTONVILLE

In this centre of social and religious activity, a veritable lighthouse sending its bright and far-reaching beams out over the treacherous waters of a dark, sinful, and poverty-stricken district, we see what the typical Institutional Church is doing in this twentieth century when older methods have failed. Sunday is a day of activity from early morning to late in the evening, with religious services, Sunday Schools, Adult Schools, Men's Own, etc. ; and every day in the week and almost every hour of the day and night, something is going on designed to uplift the people around. There are a Crèche, a Dispensary, a Poor Man's Lawyer, men's clubs, boys' and girls' clubs, gymnasium, baths (for the Borough Council of Islington has not yet provided baths and wash-houses for this district), sick benefit clubs, goose clubs, holiday funds, and other agencies too numerous to mention.

MEN'S CLUB ROOM

We peeped into the men's club rooms—open every evening from 7 to 10.30. Here is a good-sized billiard room, a coffee bar, and a cosy

reading and games room, all comfortably yet quietly furnished. We inquired as to the rules of the club, which has 200 members ; men are given a hearty welcome ; they are not pestered in any way ; they are not given tracts ; there is no religious test imposed. But experience shows that the mere fact of joining brings them in a measure under Christian influence, and time and again indifference to religion gives place to a whole-hearted enthusiasm for Christ and each other.

GIRLS' PHYSICAL DRILL

Great attention is paid to the physical well-being of the girls attached to Claremont. We saw a number of them engaged in physical drill, and it was difficult to believe from their refined appearance that they were engaged during the day-time in factories and warehouses of Islington. But two or three months of steady practice works wonders.

We could speak at some length of the Browning Settlement, the birthplace of more than one great Social Reform ; of the Passmore Edwards Settlement, specializing more in University Extension work, and approaching the problem particularly from the social and higher educational standpoints ; of Mansfield House, with its special work in the unlovely districts of Canning Town and the Customs House ; of the Bedford Institute Association with its nine centres of activity mostly in East London ;

but we have said enough to indicate generally what is being done.

SETTLEMENT WORK AND TEMPERANCE

And what bearing has the work of Oxford House, of Claremont and the other Institutional centres, upon the problem of intemperance? What is the experience of those who labour in these home mission fields? They are acquainted with the lives of the poor: they know their trials and temptations: they know that to these people the public-house too often seems the only way of escape from an appalling environment. We have elsewhere in this chapter described these settlements as lighthouses. They are, indeed, all this, and more: they are oases in a desert of depressing streets and slums.

The adaptation of church and chapel school-rooms and other premises for institutional purposes, is a direction in which the Christian Church has far to travel, but it is encouraging to know that something is being done.

The pity of it is that the problem is so vast, and Settlements and other counter-attractions comparatively few. It is true to say that only the barest fringe of the evil is or can be touched by philanthropic effort.

The evil is ubiquitous—the palliatives sporadic. More *must* be done, and the need is imperative for the Church, in its broadest and widest sense, to lead the State into this vast field of labour, which offers so great a promise of untold good to those who are now in thraldom to drink.

CHAPTER V

THE CRAVING FOR AMUSEMENT

No solution of the difficulties presented by the public-house system can ever be attained without full recognition of the craving for amusement and change inseparable from those conditions of life to which we have called attention. The Puritanism which would deny this need is fortunately out-of-date, and however much we may desire the raising of the level of the amusement provided for the public, the need for the provision is a very real one. The loud laughter at the antics of a stage comedian, with all his banalities, seems to provide relief to the work-wearied man or woman. But under the laughter is the sound, could we but tune our ears to catch it, of the nerve strain and the stress of toil which seek cessation, if only for a moment. The town dweller who, after the day's work, joins the crowd at the music hall or picture show; the lads and lasses who crowd the streets of our towns, walking to and fro, indulging in coarse jests and rough horse play to the annoyance of respectable passers-by; the Bank Holiday crowds on Hampstead Heath, with all their noise and pleasure-seeking; the frequenter of the tavern

with its light and glitter, and its relief from monotony obtained at terrible cost through the excitement of alcoholic poisoning ; all provide a warning that cannot be ignored.

The objections to the public-house are familiar to every one, and no amount of special pleading can remove the fact that, to quote John Burns, " The tavern throughout the centuries has been the ante-chamber to the workhouse, the chapel of ease to the asylum, the recruiting station for the hospital, the rendezvous of the gambler, the gathering ground for the gaol."

THE OPEN-AIR CAFÉ

But the tavern is on the spot, providing the amusement and change for which the people crave. What is to be done ?

It is sometimes urged that if we would adopt the continental system of open-air cafés, with light beers, we should meet the difficulty. But apart altogether from the fact that our climate for the greater part of the year is unsuited to this *al fresco* enjoyment, it is striking to note that in the countries where this system obtains there are many indications that alcoholism in various forms has not been checked ; indeed it is significant that the evils associated with alcoholism have increased *pari passu* with the quantity of drink consumed.

THE HAMPSHIRE HOUSE CLUB

In our last chapter we dealt with the Settlements. Most of these have a distinctly and

avowedly religious motive for their attempts to meet the evils created or fostered by alcohol. But it is not only those who strive to associate definite religion with the means of social enjoyment and intellectual uplift who are at work. In other directions there are those in whom the civic spirit, and the desire to save the young folks of the cities from falling into the drink and other kindred evils, has its practical outcome in the provision of attractions in which direct religious effort is not avowed. There is a large class to whom religion instead of being an attraction is a matter of deep suspicion, and these must be helped to meet the special temptations of city life. By these indirect means religion may eventually establish a claim to their attention.

Take, for instance, the Hampshire House Club at Hammersmith. This is a club pure and simple, where may be found a great variety of activities. The building itself, almost next door to the residence of the late William Morris, is pretty enough, with a fine lawn at the back which gives opportunity for quoits, tennis, and, on a limited scale, for cricket practice. There are clubs for cycling, football, etc., and various other out-door amusements, whilst the children are not forgotten, and Maypole dances and kindred pleasures give interest to young and old. Inside, the attractions are just as good. In addition to the billiard room, there is a games hall, with a stage suitable for concerts and dramatic performances, where lectures are given, and "Parliament" meets weekly.

An excellent library provides intellectual food ; flower shows are arranged for the cottagers, and prizes are offered for window boxes of flowers. Those responsible for the management have devoted much time and thought to brightening life by the provision of rational and pleasant spare-time occupations.

THE MIDDLESBROUGH WINTER GARDEN

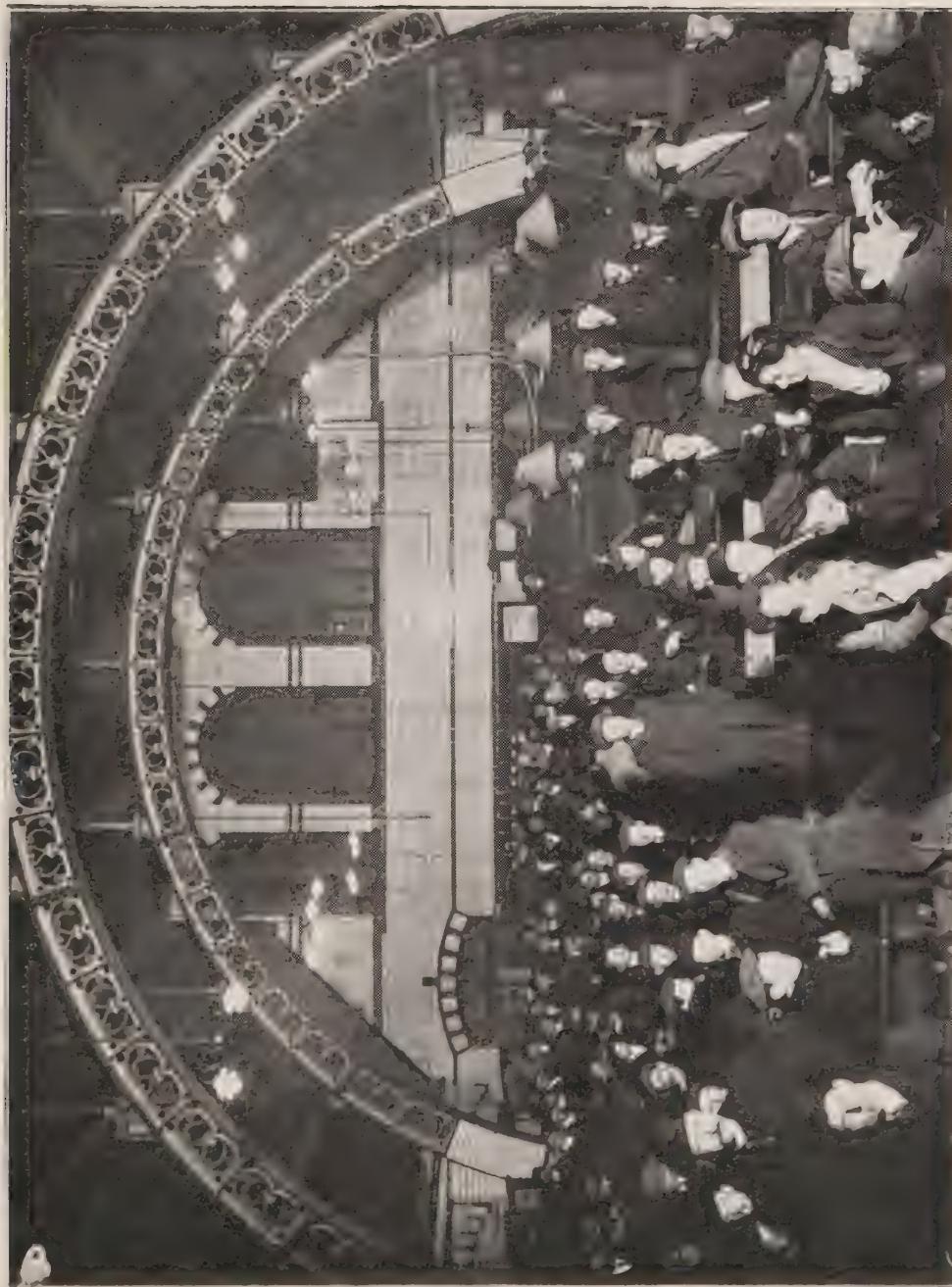
The essentially modern industrial town of Middlesbrough has not only a preponderance of working-class population, but a large number of small houses in the midst of the very conditions which usually predispose towards the frequenting of taverns. The town is of very modern growth, and utilitarianism has been too rampant for the picturesque to be possible. A combination of shipping and manufacturing occupations, with the environment of coal-fields and foundries, can hardly be considered a promising field in which to find much of the beautiful. Rather the conditions would be likely to make the attraction of the tavern potent in the extreme if we adopt the theory that intemperance is caused by social environment.

Lady Bell, wife of Sir Hugh Bell, being deeply interested in the life of the town, has endeavoured to provide a counter attraction which appears to be on sound lines. Largely through her efforts, a fund was raised, and a spacious winter garden built, bright, well lighted, and very simple in its furnishing. It is provided with tables and chairs

sufficient to accommodate some six or seven hundred people. A band plays at night; a refreshment bar, without intoxicants, dispenses such refreshments as are needed. Games, such as chess, draughts, dominoes, etc., are provided. The winter garden is open to visitors of both sexes. An entrance charge of 1*d.* per person is made, and this payment is all that is needed. There is no attempt at religious or political propaganda, and those who frequent the Hall feel that they are not enjoying a charity, but are among equals in what may indeed be called a people's palace. With regard to the music provided, the arrangements are open to some criticism, owing to the item for the provision of bands and other musical instruments being very heavy, amounting to nearly £300 a year. This is practically the amount of the annual deficiency of the working expenses, and it has been suggested that if full advantage were taken of local talent which might be voluntarily supplied by some of the local choirs and choral societies, the venture might probably be made to pay its way. A visit to this winter garden, especially on a Saturday night, cannot fail to interest the visitor, nor can it fail to prove that the attempt is doing real work in keeping men and women out of the public-house, and providing shelter for some of the younger generation, who might otherwise be far less suitably occupied in perambulating the streets, or sitting in the taverns.

SOCIAL CLUBS IN CITY BATHS

An experiment on a larger scale may be seen in operation during the winter months in Birmingham. The Winter Club and Social Institute Committee is a body to which five swimming-baths are lent by the Baths and Parks Committee of the City Council, no charge being made for hire, or lighting, or for the attendance of City Council officials. The seats used in the public parks during the summer months are lent to the Committee for the purposes of the Clubs. The baths are opened each evening from 7 to 10.30, admission being free. A concert is given at each hall every Saturday evening, on which occasion a collection is made, and so popular are these entertainments that the rooms are too small to accommodate nearly all those desirous of attending. Each club is managed by a local committee, and all the workers give their services freely. Conveners are appointed for each set of games, and are responsible for the good order and general conduct of their section of the club. People using the various games pay as follows:— Billiards, ninepence per hour, and bagatelle, fourpence per hour, for four players. Air guns, six shots for one halfpenny. Cards, one halfpenny each player for the evening. Draughts, dominoes, and chess, free. All games for women and girls are provided free of charge. In one of the clubs those who play billiards form a billiard club, and pay 3*d.* each per month in addition to the charge for the use of the tables. The Com-



SOCIAL INSTITUTION, BIRMINGHAM.

mittee are particularly careful to prohibit anything which savours in the least degree of gambling.

No propaganda is allowed, the work being purely of a social character, designed to give those using the clubs accommodation as good as, or perhaps better than, that obtainable in the public-house, without the temptation of intoxicating liquor. There is a refreshment bar at each of the clubs, but the Committee is under no pecuniary liability in respect to the supply of refreshments, as these are provided by a caterer. The cost of establishing one of these clubs is estimated at about £140, after which the upkeep is met by the payments for games.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

We were deeply interested in a visit paid to Birmingham for the purpose of seeing the clubs at work, specially making our arrangements to select an evening of normal conditions. In two of the clubs it seemed to us that there was a large proportion of ordinary middle-class people, but at the others those attending were mainly of the labouring class, and a large proportion appeared to be of the type who would usually spend the evenings lounging about the streets or in the public-house bar. We were sorry to notice that apparently little is being done for the women and girls. In one club, for instance, there were no games at all for them, and the few girls present were idly watching while the men were playing. Probably a committee of ladies might be formed

with advantage, specially to supervise arrangements for the entertainment of women and girls. A decided weakness in the scheme, we thought, was the apparent absence of any attempt to encourage the frequenters of the clubs to engage in some form of self-improvement, intellectual or physical. As no doubt the class of people using the clubs would be extremely suspicious of any efforts to improve them, the only safe course would be for men who are really interested in social reform to take some personal interest in individuals who seem to give some indication of a desire to improve their mode of living.

That these clubs are distinctly answering the purpose for which they were established is not only evident from a visit to them but also from the reports received of the complaints of local publicans, who no doubt think they are justified in objecting to the authority which levies rates upon them, encouraging efforts to interfere with their business. It is a matter for satisfaction that there are those on our public bodies who are so deeply interested in the social welfare of the masses that they are willing to risk unpopularity for the sake of helping their weaker brethren.

We are personally convinced that whilst the efforts described above fall short of what we should like to see done, they, at any rate, DO provide something which is a very substantial advance upon the conditions existing before their establishment. We are not at all sure that there

is not a heavy charge to be laid against the Christian Church in having failed to provide for just this class of people something which would have led them by social improvement to spiritual regeneration. Where the Churches have failed, or perhaps have not attempted, to grasp the opportunity, all honour to those who, as individuals, are striving to improve the social condition of their fellows. Again, we would remind our readers that in fighting the public-houses, conditions so complex and difficulties so far-reaching have to be faced that these flank attacks are of the highest importance. The craving for amusement exists ; unless harmless gratification is provided, we may be quite certain that while the desire for personal gain maintains the public-houses in all their power and attractiveness, they will continue to be largely frequented.

CINEMATOGRAPHS

We welcome even the establishment of the cinematograph theatres. Almost without exception unlicensed so far as liquor is concerned, they are providing an entertainment day by day and evening by evening which, whilst it might not appeal to the intellectual, nevertheless is attractive to a large section of the community. In our lectures on the subject of counter-attractions we have invited discussion, and on one occasion a most interesting testimony came from a bank manager. He has since written a letter in which he says :—

" On the day following your lecture I asked a very intelligent publican if he considered the opening of the cinematograph palaces had really affected his business. His reply was that there could be no doubt at all about it. Many of his customers went to them two or three times every week, and instead of staying the whole evening in his house, they would just look in for a single drink on the way home. Most of these people go to the places that charge the lowest prices."

This experience is borne out by reports from other places. We have ourselves visited many of these shows in different parts of England, and whilst melodrama and scenery constitute a considerable part of the programmes, there is, of course, a good deal of the rather silly comic element. But so far we have seen little to which serious objection could be taken, and our belief is that the police keep a pretty strict supervision over what goes on. At the same time it is a matter of some doubt whether the cinematograph and kindred shows are calculated permanently to alienate people from the public-house. Possibly their influence as a counter-attraction will prove to be only a passing one. More depends upon the quantity and attractiveness of the entertainment provided in these places than is perhaps the case in some other counter-attractions.

Perhaps the most disturbing feature in regard to this is the creation and fostering of a craving for sensationalism, and this especially amongst children. On one occasion, one of the writers was present at a matinee, professedly for children, of which the *pièce de résistance* was a melodrama

of the most unsuitable character, but the youthful audience, not 5 per cent of whom could be over twelve years of age, seemed to follow with the greatest keenness the sordid details of the unpleasant story ; while their cheers for the heroine, their hisses for the villain of the piece, were given in the most approved transpontine style.

CHAPTER VI

OTHER EXPERIMENTS

IT will have been noticed that considerable prominence has been given to various kinds of amusement pure and simple. At the risk of some repetition, and even at the risk of appearing to over-emphasize this side of the subject, we have still one or two other details to consider. It must be borne in mind that we are not at the moment concerned to advocate any particular form of counter-attraction. Rather our purpose is to lay all possible stress on the fact of tavern attraction, and to point out what means, free from the dangers of alcohol, are at hand to meet it.

THE CROYDON RECREATION CLUB

The Croydon Recreation Club presents some novel features, and in a variety of ways is a decided advance in the direction of counter-attractions.

The Committee is an influential one and thoroughly representative of all the religious and social institutions of Croydon. The club premises were acquired early in 1916, and opened in May of that year.

Ample provision is made for dancing, this form

of recreation being permitted from 7 to 9.30. On visiting the club recently, we were delighted with the good order and decorum displayed by the dancers. Instruction is given in dancing, boxing, and other forms of sport. A fine billiard table and a piano, both well used, are in a good first-floor room. There is a well-managed canteen. A distinctly charming and unusual feature in clubs of this character is a reading-room, tastefully furnished with a few good pictures on the walls and a small library. Another interesting feature of the club is the Sunday evening concerts, when high class music is provided, followed by a short lecture or chat on some question of general interest. An exhibition of work done by the members was held recently and as a result it is hoped to start Arts and Crafts classes, and so develop this side of the work very considerably as opportunity offers. The subscription for membership of the club is 3*d.* per week. Casual visitors are admitted on payment of 2*d.*, while wounded soldiers are admitted free of charge. Over 44,000 entries were recorded during the past twelve months. This indicates that the club is appreciated, and that it is doing useful work in directions hitherto overlooked. Those who use the club include shop-assistants, dressmakers, soldiers, munition workers, clerks, chauffeurs, etc.

The Executive meet monthly, but as the Committee have a very able Superintendent, who has gained great experience in social recreation work in connection with the Birmingham

Social Clubs, they wisely leave much to her judgment and discretion. The club will well repay a visit on the part of any one interested in social work of this nature.

TEMPERANCE BILLIARD HALLS

The Temperance Billiard Hall Company is a remarkable commercial undertaking which is doing much in some places to meet the need of the day. In many of the suburbs of Liverpool, Manchester, and other Lancashire towns, the spacious and handsome billiard halls of this Company are familiar sights. The Company has extended its operations to the South London district, and we have taken some pains to examine its working. We have seen several of these halls, and have been much impressed by many of their features. They are most artistically designed, and this has been effected without sacrificing economy. Both externally and internally everything is, and looks, good; and colour and brilliance are secured without sacrifice of comfort. The general effect is one of richness and excellence. The Company has its own architects, and itself manufactures the billiard tables, chairs, seats, and all accessories, which are of good quality. The halls are open to the public from 1 p.m. till midnight, but naturally the evening finds them most frequented. The charges are reasonable, and the tables may be used by two players for fifteen minutes for 3d.

In some of the London halls a new departure has been taken in the provision of café lounges. At Lewisham, for instance, the café lounge, decorated with pictures, art ware, etc., and equipped with chess, draughts, and other games, makes an attractive place in which to take a quiet half-hour for refreshment. In the centre of the café is a fountain, whilst ferns and other foliage plants in profusion add their charm. There are cosy corners, and an orchestra is provided for occasional music. At the Wandsworth Hall a feature is the provision of committee rooms, available for meetings of trades' councils and other bodies. The halls having been licensed for billiards, come under the direct supervision of the authorities. No intoxicating liquor is supplied, but the refreshments on sale in the cafés are of the best. Needless to say, gambling is strictly prohibited.

The Temperance Billiard Halls are designed primarily to meet the needs of the clerk class, which form so large a proportion of the residents in the suburbs of London and the provincial cities. In investigating conditions in a lower stratum of society, it has been pointed out to us on more than one occasion, that for the labouring classes counter-attractions must be on a less elaborate scale. They need to be more "homely," as described in the chapter respecting the Winter Garden at Middlesbrough and the Social Institutes at Birmingham.

GOOSE CLUBS

Time was when the Goose Club was almost entirely an appanage of the public-house. Fortunately this is altering, and there are many clubs entirely dissociated from the public-house, to the great advantage of the contributors. We obtained details of several temperance goose clubs. From one, which is in direct connection with a temperance society, we learned that the subscription was sixpence per week for thirteen weeks. Each member must declare by the end of October what he will take out, the choice being turkey, leg of pork, beef, groceries, or half beef and half groceries. There were four honorary collectors, besides committee and officers, and the membership reached 960.

On a very large scale, the club in connection with the Browning Settlement at Walworth was most interesting. For fifteen weeks prior to Christmas, over 5,000 families in Walworth contributed sixpence per week to this club. In return for this subscription, the members could have a goose or joint of meat and a parcel of grocery. The scenes at the Settlement on the distribution night spoke eloquently of the promise of "a merry Christmas" in its real sense. As Mr. Stead, the Warden, remarked to one of the writers: "The work was carried on to the great disgust of the many publicans of the district, who realized what a potent influence was exercised by this practical and disinterested work



GOOSE CLUB, BROWNING SETTLEMENT.

amongst those who formerly patronized the public-house goose club, to the no small advantage of the publican, and the extremely doubtful advantage of the member."¹

FLOWER SHOWS

Much the same may be said with regard to Flower Shows. In some localities the Flower Show, with the necessary preparation in the form of garden culture, must serve a useful purpose. In the large cities, however, the possibilities are limited by the small number of those who have the opportunity of a garden to cultivate. At the same time, window boxes for flowers and similar devices, and the growing of bulbs in glasses or pots, by giving an interest to life, may serve to wean some from the public-house.

RUSKIN HOUSE

Efforts have been made from time to time by temperance reformers to make some provision for the meetings of Trade Unions, Friendly Societies and similar bodies which are, in the majority of cases, held on licensed premises at a nominal rent and in an environment in every respect inimical to those steadily rising ideals which impartial observers will admit to be among the best features of the Labour movement. A notably successful example is to be found at

¹ Owing to the difficulties of trading with firms oversea and the high prices of commodities at home it has been impossible to carry on this club during the war. The promoters hope to re-start it after the conclusion of the war.

Croydon, and the result has proved so satisfactory that the details only need to be known to lead to similar action being taken elsewhere.

Some years ago the Croydon Temperance Council was faced by the fact that the local Trade Societies had no option but to meet in the public-houses, no other doors being open to them. Practically all the societies had expressed their willingness to meet elsewhere. Ultimately through the generosity of a local resident in Croydon, much interested in practical Temperance measures, a large building, formally a hotel, was purchased, to be held in trust, as a meeting place for Trade Unions and kindred societies. This building was appropriately named Ruskin House, and is for the practically unrestricted work of the men, except for the sole condition accepted gladly by them, that no intoxicating liquors shall be consumed on the premises or any licence applied for.

All the Trade Societies in Croydon hold their meetings at Ruskin House, and it is estimated that about three thousand men make use of it weekly. The societies pay a nominal rent (£12 per annum) and keep the building in good repair. The men take a pride in the place, and the venture as a practical counter-attraction to the public-house has proved an unqualified success.

We have endeavoured to show in this and the preceding chapter that something is being done upon lines apart from avowedly religious effort, to aid the provision of counter-attractions to the public-house.

CHAPTER VII

TEMPERANCE CATERING

COFFEE HOUSES

THOSE who are familiar with our great cities know that there are many businesses supplying food and beverages which are neither public-houses, nor nominally at least, antagonistic to them. Among these are the coffee-houses. A great deal has been done through the coffee-house movement to provide a refuge for many who would otherwise have been drawn to the tavern. But the prevailing characteristics of the coffee-house are not particularly inviting. They are seldom too cleanly or comfortable, and frequently are anything but well ventilated. Nevertheless, they have in a sense done pioneer work, and their example has been followed by much more ambitious attempts to cater for those who do not desire intoxicants. In most of our large towns there are companies with several establishments much superior to the old-fashioned coffee-houses, and their usefulness can hardly be over-estimated. The Birmingham Coffee House Company is a good example of what we mean.

CAFÉS

A still further development has been seen in the last few years, for whereas it was at one time almost impossible to obtain refreshments except on licensed premises, now the café business is not only proving a commercial success, in beautiful premises with elegant fittings, and the provision of choicest refreshments served daintily and quickly, but has helped forward a real advance which is telling in favour of greater sobriety. From figures supplied by the managing director of one of the best and largest café companies in the country, we learn that a fair average number of customers supplied weekly in a small café varies from one to three thousand, while in one of the larger cafés, during a recent week, no less than 9,000 meals were supplied. London and other large centres again, provide an object lesson in the crowds of young men, city clerks and others, who turn into various smoking cafés for an after-lunch smoke and game of dominoes, and who, by their patronage of these establishments, indicate that there is a very large section of the public perfectly contented to do without alcohol if a suitable alternative to the tavern be provided.

It is quite true that this particular feature applies more especially to a social condition far different from that to be found amongst the poorer districts, but anything which tends towards the forsaking of licensed premises is bound to tell sooner or later in favour of the

general advance of sober thought and temperate habit. It is not necessary that the cafés should be highly elaborate or ornamental; simple furniture, scrupulous cleanliness, and businesslike management are the chief requisites of success; and this movement may well be commended to the support of temperance people.

TEMPERANCE HOTELS

With regard to hotels, we are painfully aware that any criticism is sure to be resented, but in spite of this, we are bound to say that not only in the course of our own investigations, but also on the evidence of a very large number of commercial and other acquaintances we are convinced that there is only too much truth in the familiar charge that the average temperance hotel is not attractive. We are quite aware that there are great difficulties in this line of business, and that in their competition with licensed hotels, those which are unlicensed are at a disadvantage, owing to their being debarred from one substantial source of profit. Still, such hotels can be well managed, and can be made to pay, and could there be throughout the country a large increase in the class of temperance hotels now being run successfully in London and other large centres, it would be a great advantage, and a real contribution towards sobriety.

COFFEE STALLS

Before leaving this branch of our subject, we

should refer to the useful work done by the open-air coffee stalls. In the cold and darkness of the early hours of a winter morning these unpretentious stalls supply a real need. The St. John (Reading) Branch of the C.E.T.S. carries on this business very successfully. The work there was commenced in 1901, and most of the business is done in halfpenny orders. The stall is open daily, except Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday, from 5 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., and from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., with an additional hour and a half on Saturdays. Out of the profits of the stall, substantial grants have been made to various temperance objects, and £600 given towards the purchase of a Parish Institute. As a consequence of its success, other coffee stalls have been established in other parts of the town, one belonging to the B.W.T.A., and another to the local Temperance Council. In Norwich, again, a most successful business has been carried on for years by a company, an outcome of the Adult School movement, and in many other places this useful form of work has been productive of excellent results.

The ideal is to provide everywhere, not only for the cheaper, but for the better class trade, and by establishing businesses for the provision of refreshments without alcohol, to weaken still further the hold of the tavern and licensed hotel upon the general public.

CHAPTER VIII

THREE STRIKING EFFORTS

THE RED HOUSE, STEPNEY

IN the neighbourhood of Commercial Road, Stepney, vice, misery, and degradation are rampant. Only a few minutes from the Bank, from the centre of the Empire's greatest city, and what a contrast is presented ! There, everything speaks of the nation's wealth and commercial prosperity : here, we are face to face with poverty in its worst and most painful forms.

Over these turbulent waters of poverty and sin, shines out the beacon of St. Augustine's, Stepney, a parish whose work is in many respects unique. The immediate work of the Church and its clergy is on advanced Anglo-Catholic lines. There is no possibility of mistaking the "atmosphere" of the parish, or the distinctive nature of the doctrines systematically and diligently taught by the Vicar, Father Richard Wilson, and his assistant clergy and lay helpers. But side by side with all this there is the fullest endeavour to help and raise suffering humanity, irrespective of creed or of any acceptance of the particular

doctrines of the Church. It is, perhaps, the best example of what is known as the "Institutional" Church, within the Church of England.

A PUBLIC-HOUSE WITHOUT BEER

A three minutes' tram ride along the Commercial Road from Aldgate, and the Red House is reached—a handsome, well-constructed, red brick building some six storeys high, by its spaciousness and commanding appearance revealing in striking contrast the meanness and poverty-stricken character of the surrounding buildings. Across its full width is the legend "The Red House : A Public-house without Beer." The right to such title is amply vindicated when the visitor becomes acquainted with the many activities within its hospitable walls. Over the doorway is a notice to the effect that this is "A good pull up for Bishops," a humorous variation of the legend usually seen on the windows of the old-fashioned coffee shop. Whatever Bishops may do, that the Red House is appreciated by others in lowlier walks of life we can certainly affirm.

In the basement are large and spacious kitchens, with a dining-room capable of accommodating 100 diners. On the ground floor is a coffee bar open from 5.30 a.m. to 11.30 p.m., and another dining-hall seating 120. Upstairs we find the men's club-room and a first-class restaurant. The average number of customers per day is about 1,000, and the custom varies from halfpenny

slices to a tenpenny dinner. The staff of the coffee palace consists of six ex-army men, eight women, and a lad. The food is of the best and well cooked, all the departments being served from the same kitchen at prices to suit the customers. Some of the meals ordered by the men are Yorkshire pudding, 1*d.*; potatoes and gravy, 1*d.*; steak pudding, 2*d.*, and so on; while others in better circumstances may rise to roast beef and vegetables, 6*d.* Women and girls from neighbouring factories who are specially catered for at St. Augustine's seem to prefer the following menu:—Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*; fetch-your-own-fried-fish or tinned salmon, 1*d.*, with soup, 1*d.*

Above the coffee palace is the recreation-room for working men. It is not a club in the ordinary sense of the term. There is no election, no subscription. The homeless, the out-of-work, and above all, the man out of heart, may come here and find not only a quiet corner to sit in, but games to play—billiards, bagatelle, chess, draughts, etc.—and still more, he will find kindly sympathy extended, for the lady workers of the Mission are generally at hand to chat with the men or join in some of the games. The recreation-room is open during the middle of the day, when the men who have dined below come up for a chat and smoke before resuming their daily toil; and also from 7.30 to 11 at night. But be it noted that none come just for what they can get, for nothing is given but sympathy, though practical help is forthcoming in cases of

real necessity on the evidence of an earnest desire to make a fresh start.

On the top floor of the Red House are twenty-four bedrooms for men, let at 4s. per week. Clean and comfortably furnished, they are always in demand, one room, for example, having been occupied by the same tenant for a number of years.

DOES THE RED HOUSE PAY ITS WAY ?

The above question will naturally occur to our readers. After years of effort, the cost of building and establishing the Red House has been wiped out, and it is now practically free from debt. By the exercise of the strictest economy, the receipts balance the expenditure and allow of a reserve fund to meet the inevitable depreciation. The workers, knowing what the Red House is to those who use it, are satisfied.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OF THE RED HOUSE

We inquired if any religious influence was brought to bear upon the frequenters. There are, of course, numerous indications of the particular religious doctrines taught at St. Augustine's; but apart from this we were assured that the Red House was carried on purely as a social effort, and that nothing was done which might be regarded as distinctly propagandist work. Our own observations on the several visits we paid entirely confirmed this. A Bible class is, however, held on one night in the week,

BLUE HOUSE, STEPNEY.



To face page 62

attended by a number of the men, and naturally when any one evinces a desire for instruction, every facility is given. As is the general experience in social reform work, the association with those who know the blessings of religion, slowly perhaps, but none the less surely, creates in men the desire to lead a better and cleaner life.

THE BLUE HOUSE

The Blue House, an offshoot of the Red House, caters for 250 girls employed in the factories clustering round Commercial Road. Rooms underneath the Church are set apart for their use. They are generally supplied with dinners from the Red House, or may bring certain food and cook it for themselves. In their dinner hour these girls cook and eat their food, wash up and scrub their tables, and still find time for some recreation in the gymnasium. Our illustration depicts a scene in a junior girls' dining-room. By paying a penny a week these girls are allowed to have their own lock-up cupboard. Marks are awarded by the Mission ladies for cleanliness and tidiness. Visiting the Blue House on two or three separate occasions, we learned much regarding the efforts made on behalf of these factory girls of all ages. Not only are they looked after in the dinner hour ; in many other ways they are strengthened for their place in the battle of life. Full of animal spirits and boisterous to a degree, these girls evince genuine affection for the Mission workers, whom they know to be

their best friends. It should be added that the Blue House is conducted as a definite part of the religious work of the parish.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Another effort of the Mission is the White House, the home of much useful work in the interests of homeless, hopeless, stranded men. Here it is usual to have a concert on the Sunday evening, and to give the men a cup of tea and a piece of cake free of charge. These are men who will not respond at first to any effort to reach them by the appeals of religion. They are hungry and heartsore ; at enmity with God and the world, and, as Father Dolling, another great social worker, used to say, "It is little use to preach religion to people with empty stomachs." But efforts are made to touch these derelicts on life's highway. "To be practical" seems to be the guiding motto of this Mission. For example, an "out-of-work" going after a job can get a shave, can have his hair cut, and a good wash at the White House two or three times a week free of charge. As the man in charge said to us : "A man stands far more chance of getting a job if he is fairly clean and tidy than if he goes with a fortnight's growth of beard on his chin." A small matter perhaps, but an eminently practical, common-sense way of helping a man.

Note. Some of the Social work described in this chapter has been temporarily suspended owing to the war, but will be resumed when a return to normal conditions renders it desirable and practicable.

THE TEMPERANCE WORK

There is probably no parish in the country where more definite Temperance work is carried on. It is indeed one of the strongest features of the place. There is a Temperance Society for every conceivable grade and section of those who come under the influence of the work. There are societies for men, for women, for boys and girls, for young men and women. There is the Five Oaks Temperance Guild, especially for the hoppers, a sort of secret society possessing its own particular signs and ceremonies, owing its curious name to the fact that at the first meeting held at Five Oaks Green in Kent, only five men attended and became abstainers. Now the Society numbers hundreds of men and women on its books. From such small beginnings has arisen a veritable forest of sturdy Temperance Oaks. "Father Richard," as the Vicar is affectionately called, is known also as the "Hoppers' Parson" by reason of his self-sacrificing labours on behalf of the many of his parishioners who go year by year to the hop fields of Kent.

Would that we could dilate upon the numberless other agencies of this East End parish. What appealed to us so strongly was the practical, Christlike sympathy for the thousands of poor souls herded together in this appalling district, in their trials and failings. While within the Church there is the high sacramental teaching

and practice by which the advanced section of the Church of England stands, at the same time there would appear to be also the frank recognition of the fact that these things, essentials though they be to the Anglo-Catholic, of themselves avail but little till the ground has been prepared by the provision of those material things which make their appeal to those who know no God but the satisfaction of their own desires ; or again, those who know what it is to live without joy and brightness, whose only lot would seem to be to spend their years in toiling for a bare pittance in sweated industries, to be often on the verge of starvation ; to live, eat, sleep, work, and possibly die in a one-room tenement.

The work at St. Augustine's, Stepney, is a practical contribution to the problem of how to counteract the evils of intemperance. Men and women are not merely won to the signing of a pledge, they are provided with something to take the place in their lives once held by the public-house. They are pointed to a brighter and a better life ; they are helped to attain to heights of which perchance they never before had dreamed.

CHAPTER IX

COUNTER-ATTRACTIONS IN WAR TIME

THE great world war is responsible for many evils, but in respect of the movement for the promotion of counter-attractions, it has done more than anything else to demonstrate the necessity for places of social relaxation as a permanent feature of our social life.

The enlistment of men in large numbers and their necessary transfer to new districts for training purposes with the consequent deprivation of the wholesome restraining influences of family life called for some special action on the part of the churches and those societies which exist to meet the religious and social needs of the people.

It is known to all how churches, societies and individuals combined to make provision for the needs of the recruits. As large numbers of men were drafted to the various training centres so they were catered for, more or less effectively. It is only necessary in this chapter to record some of the more important features of a great movement, which may be profitably examined under two heads :—

1. Towns Committees ; and
2. National Societies.

1. Towns Committees

Undoubtedly the county town of Bedford provides the best example of successful united action. In August, 1914, as the result of a town's meeting, called after notice had been received that 17,000 Scots of the Highland Division were coming, the "Bedford Borough Recreation Committee for the Troops" was formed. The members number twelve ; nine of the original members are still serving. About £100 was given in subscriptions, and the Committee has carried on its work since on the profits of the canteens. The number of canteens and recreation-rooms has varied according to the need, rising during the busiest period to forty-one. Each canteen is managed by its own Committee. In the Central Hall (the Corn Exchange) about 5,000 men are catered for weekly, during which period nearly a ton of porridge, in addition to other provisions, is often sold. From 15,000 to 30,000 men are accommodated in the various halls placed at the disposal of the Committee. Up to the month of August, 1917, 2,700 concerts and entertainments had been given. Lending libraries, baths in private houses, savings banks, and a laundry department with free mending, have been provided.

Other enterprises undertaken by the Committee include Sunday evening concerts during the



A Y.M.C.A. MARQUEE.

winter at the theatre, the picture palace and Corn Exchange, each of which seats about a thousand men. Outdoor sports form a prominent feature, and in this connection the Corporation has placed six football grounds at the Committee's disposal. The biggest Highland games' meeting ever held was organized at Bedford, 17,000 persons being present and 1,500 competitions carried through.

Working cordially and enthusiastically under the direction of the Committee are 300 voluntary workers.

There has been very little drunkenness at Bedford. Every officer commanding who has been in the town (five or six divisions have succeeded each other) has testified to the great value of the work in thus catering for the leisure time of the soldiers.

2. *Societies*

It would need a volume to deal adequately with the extent and variety of the good works for which the Y.M.C.A. with marvellous courage has accepted responsibility in its desire to be a real help to the soldier and to the munition worker. Without doubt, when that record is written, it will be a revelation of what the real spirit of Christianity can accomplish, even during a world war which has shaken and well-nigh shattered civilization.

It is common knowledge that immediately on the outbreak of war, the Y.M.C.A. saw the

opportunity for service and promptly seized it. The society is world-wide in its operations and possesses some of the best organizers ever found within the sphere of religious and social work. Right well have they spent themselves in the service of their fellow-men. At home, and in the Dominions, the Y.M.C.A. hut is to be found ; on the battlefield, behind the lines, wherever the men are to be found, there the Y.M.C.A. with its familiar red triangle means rest, recreation and refreshment, both spiritual and material.

In France alone, there are over 1,400 Y.M.C.A. workers, one-third of whom are curates of the Church of England and ministers of the Free Churches. Every one of them can find in the Y.M.C.A. work abundant opportunities for reaching the men and influencing them for their good. It is an axiom with the Y.M.C.A. that the best service is to work as well as pray.

One of the great enterprises of the society has been the provision, free of charge, of notepaper and envelopes. This alone costs some £50,000 a year ; truly an astonishing fact ! But this constitutes a living spiritual link between men and the home life they have left behind. Who can estimate the value of such work as this !

There are many other departments, only a few of which we can mention, but they will suffice to indicate the wide-spread activities of this great organization, and the care and thought expended in order to lighten the burden our fighting men are called upon to bear. There is the depart-

ment which organizes entertainments at home and, what is more important, abroad, wherever the war is being waged. This is in charge of Miss Lena Ashwell, who has rendered noble service in providing wholesome amusement. Sports are arranged—football and cricket matches and other games which act as an effective counter-attraction to the perils of the streets. Free tickets admitting to selected theatres and music halls and cinemas are provided, and these serve a like useful purpose.

The work at the docks and in munition areas is not the least important of the many sided activities in which the Y.M.C.A. engages. For some workers the advent of the Y.M.C.A. hut has meant that for the first time it was possible to obtain a warm meal in decent and comfortable surroundings.

Nor will the special work commenced with the outbreak of war cease with the conclusion of peace. Strong and influential committees are at work upon after-the-war problems. It is intended that when the war is over and the men are returning to resume as far as possible their peace-time avocations, there shall be in every town and village throughout the country a Y.M.C.A. hut, which shall be a place of recreation, rest and relaxation, free from the perils inseparable from the sale of liquor.

The work of the Y.M.C.A. with all its world-wide ramifications is nobly and grandly conceived, and in the fulfilment of its aims, a great advance

will be made towards a sober and a happier England.

The Church Army is engaged in similar work to that of the Y.M.C.A., though the spiritual side is definitely that of the Church of England. It has over 800 huts, tents and centres of various kinds, stationed wherever men are fighting or training. Each hut or tent has a small space partitioned off for quiet thought or prayer, and Sunday and week-day services are held for all who care to attend—and many do care. Like the Y.M.C.A., the C.A. supplies notepaper and envelopes free, and this alone involves an expenditure of £10,000 a year.

A feature is made of hostels in London and elsewhere. The chief one is at the Buckingham Palace Hotel. Here, with the addition of a portion of the Riding School, attached to the Royal Mews, which His Majesty the King has placed at the disposal of the C.A., 600 soldiers can be accommodated at a time ; no man stranded in London need be at a loss where to turn for a bed and reasonable comfort.

The relatives of wounded men are taken in charge by the C.A. and by the Y.M.C.A. and seen safely through to France, free of charge, and relieved of all anxieties as to passports, sea and rail passage, accommodation, etc. Nothing can heal the crushing sorrow of those who go to see their relatives for the last time, but much can be done, and is done, to remove what seems to many the formidable obstacles incident

to foreign travel. Discharged and disabled men are also trained by the society for agricultural and other work.

The Church of England Temperance Society is doing useful work, in providing recreation centres in various parts of the country, particularly in the counties of Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Oxford and Worcestershire.

Special attention is naturally paid to the Temperance question and the society has received many letters of appreciation from men who have signed the pledge in one of the recreation tents, and have found this a real safeguard in combatting the special temptations which appear to be inseparable from the soldier's life. The society is not engaging in this work to the same extent as the other societies referred to above, but nevertheless is doing a valuable work, and is concentrating upon some special features which seem to be the province of the C.E.T.S.

The Church of England Men's Society, the great Free Churches, the Salvation Army and other associations have contributed their quota, and provided for the soldier in war time. When one tries to understand all the efforts that are being made daily, nay hourly, in all parts of the world, to modify the inevitable hardships and terrors of a modern war, one is moved to wonder what would have happened to our soldiers, in most cases suddenly transferred from their

ordinary peace time avocations to the ghastly realities of war, had not the Churches and the National Societies rallied to the call, and used their best endeavours to cope with the problem. The work that is being done has been the saving of the situation, making just bearable what would otherwise be intolerable.

In reviewing the great religious and social work being accomplished by the various agencies providing relaxation to the soldier in war time, one is encouraged to hope that when peace dawns once more, the provision of counter-attractions, which some have urged for many years past, will be taken up with all seriousness and vigour. The experiences of war time demonstrates that if we wish to win men from the public-house, and all that indulgence in intoxicants may lead to, we must be prepared with some places where necessary relief can be found on a better basis than is supplied by the public-house with its accompanying temptation to drink.

INDUSTRIAL CANTEENS

During the third year of the war, the War Secretary called attention to the strange fact that "the making of weapons of destruction" was affording "the occasion to humanize industry."

Among the efforts for this humanizing, a prominent place must be given to the constructive side of the work undertaken by the Central

Control Board (Liquor Traffic). They early recognized that for the increase of efficiency, and for the reduction of industrial drinking, the provision of adequate facilities for food, refreshment and recreation was an absolute necessity. A study of the successive reports of the Board will show that with further experience this factor has become more and more important, until the Board's Canteen Committee "impressed with the consensus of the opinions which they have received as to the substantial advantage both to employers and workers following the establishment of an adequate and well-managed canteen."

Among the direct benefits attributed to this, "less tendency to alcoholism" finds a place, and the Board's Third Report (p. 12) says "the industrial munitions canteens" have increased sobriety and have done much to reduce industrial drinking. "They have served in part as a counter-attraction to the public-house and in part as supplying an improved nutrition which has reduced the temptation to drink."

The canteens to which such satisfactory tribute is thus given are not all under the same management, but may be described as coming under three distinct classes, viz., those established by—

- (a) The employer, with or without a professional caterer ;
- (b) Voluntary Agencies or Philanthropic Societies ;
- (c) The Control Board itself.

But under whichever class of management,

the principle arrived at is the same, viz., "to make the canteen as attractive as possible to the workers, to make them feel that it is *their* canteen (not a charitable institution), a place where they can expect a good meal at a reasonable price under good conditions."¹

That such a valuable piece of work undertaken by the State, already showing such excellent results, should not be extended and made permanent would be nothing short of a national calamity!

It must of course be borne in mind that (as will be seen elsewhere in this book) the work of the Central Control Board follows the magnificent pioneer work which has been carried on for many years by some of the larger employers of labour in the United Kingdom.

But all these efforts, excellent as they are in themselves, are far too scattered and too limited in their operations to do more than touch the fringe of this question, which cries aloud for a settlement. And whilst the provision of counter-attractions, either by municipal or national action, may seem at present impossible because of the expense involved, the public must learn that there is a financial side to the social and moral evils which admittedly result from, or are terribly aggravated by, the drink traffic. The cost of the nation intellectually, socially, and morally is incalculable. An estimate of the

¹ "Feeding the Munition Worker"—H.M. Stationery Office, 6d.

cost in money is simply appalling. As a crime-producer, as a direct and prolific source of disease, physical and mental, as the "most potent and universal factor in bringing about pauperism," drink occupies a tragic and baleful pre-eminence, and the national expenditure upon it is the greatest economic blunder in the world.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

AT the present time, consideration for the workers is more than ever recognized as necessary, and this will be still further emphasized after the war. That the indifference to their needs and their natural and justifiable craving for recreation and amusement, must be included among the causes which have gravely increased the problem of intemperance, is now pretty widely recognized. Our purpose is to suggest some of the complications of the liquor problem and to describe a few of the main directions in which business common sense and a wise philanthropy have endeavoured to lessen the evil by providing for the legitimate needs of those who are too often exposed to some of the more insidious temptations which lead to inebriety.

At the very outset we wish to make one thing clear—we are advocating the provision of “alcohol-free” facilities for rest, refreshment and recreation.

Already the tavern is ubiquitous ; there are no less than 29·44 licensed houses to every 10,000 of the population, whilst in the busy centres of commerce and industry—in other words, just in those places where “industrial drinking”

is at its worst, there are 25·72 licensed houses to every 10,000 of the population. There is no need to add to the number.

There are multitudes of people who do not want alcohol—either when they are seeking rest and recreation, or with their food. Many of these would be only too thankful to be spared the temptation which is often involved in the facilities which exist for its purchase and consumption.

In the evenings—the time when generally speaking there is leisure—the taverns are open, but there is almost nothing which would provide social intercourse without the constant inducement of custom to take alcohol “for the good of the house.” Perhaps the difficulty on Sundays is still greater. That there is a real appreciation of the “alcohol-free” hut or canteen has been proved to demonstration by the experience of the Y.M.C.A., the Church Army, the C.E.T.S., etc. The men in H.M. Forces and the munition workers have found the value of these places, and it is very logical to conclude that with the necessary modifications, civilians in time of peace would equally appreciate similar institutions were they readily available.

The avenues leading to inebriety are many. In countless instances the habit of frequent drinking has been formed gradually and unconsciously. The temptation has been subtle, and too late the force of habit has been discovered wellnigh unbreakable. We plead that this

danger shall be recognized and that an enlightened state will make a prime duty of the proper provision of alcohol-free counter-attractions. In this way we believe there will be opened avenues to sobriety, thrift and efficiency, and not the individual only, but the nation itself will reap the benefit of a wise and beneficent cure for those who make the nation's wealth.

If by these short studies it should be our privilege to stir one heart to action, we shall rejoice to have done something. We would appeal to our readers to ask themselves what is their responsibility, their privilege, in this matter of temperance? Are they doing all they can to help those who are fighting the evils of intemperance? Are they lending all the weight of their influence on the side of those who are striving against the deadly foe of national righteousness? Is there nothing they can do, by the provision of counter-attractions, by their personal help in the club for boys and girls, or in other ways, to fill the need in some human life? And are they setting a clean example of personal abstinence from that which is to so many of their fellow-beings the way to ruin, misery, despair, and death?

The stone must be rolled away, so that the voice of the living Christ shall reach those who are sleeping the sleep of apathy, self-indulgence, and sin, and call them into that light of the fuller day which is His priceless gift to all who will rise and follow Him.

